

The Mad Engineer.

This thrilling story is furnished by a Prussian railroad conductor. My train left Dantzic in the morning generally about eight o'clock; but once a week we had to wait for the arrival of the steamer from Stockholm. It was the morning of the steamer's arrival that I came down from the hotel and found that my engineer had been so seriously injured that he could not perform his work. A railway-carriage had run over him, and broken one of his legs. I went immediately to the engine-house to procure another engineer for I knew there were three or four in reserve there, but I was disappointed. I inquired for Westphal, but was informed that he had gone to Sreogen to see his mother. Gondolph had been sent to Konigsberg, on the road. But where was Mayne? He had leave of absence for two days, and had gone one one knew whither.

that we were dashing along at a speed never travelled on that road. Posts, fences, rocks, and trees flew by in one undistinguishing mass, and the carriages now swayed fearfully. I started to my feet, and met a passenger on the platform. He was one of the chief owners of our road, and was just on his way to Berlin. He was pale and excited. "Sir," he gasped, "is Martin Kroll on the engine?" "Yes," I told him. "Holy Virgin! didn't you know him?" "Know!" I repeated, somewhat puzzled; "what do you mean? He told me his name was Kroll, and that he was an engineer. We had no one to run the engine, and—" "You took him!" interrupted the man. "Good heavens, sir, he is as crazy as a man can be! He turned his brain over a new plan for applying steam power. I saw him at the station, but did not fully recognize him, as I was in a hurry. Just now one of your passengers told me that your engineers were all gone this morning, and that you found one that was stranger to you. Then I knew that the man whom I had seen was Martin Kroll. He had escaped from the hospital at Stettin. You must get him off somehow." The whole fearful truth was now open to me. The speed of the train was increasing every moment, and I knew that a few more miles per hour would launch us all into destruction. I called to the guard, and then made my way forward as quick as possible. I reached the after platform of the after tender, and there stood Kroll on the engine-board, his hat and coat off, his long black hair floating wildly in the wind, his shirt unbuttoned at the front, his sleeves rolled up, with a pistol in his teeth, and thus glaring upon the fireman, who lay motionless upon the fuel. The furnace was stuffed till the very latch of the door was red hot, and the whole engine was quivering and swaying as though it would shiver to pieces. "Kroll! Kroll!" I cried at the top of my voice. The crazy engineer started and caught the pistol in his hand. O, how those great black eyes glared, and how ghastly and frightful the face looked! "Ha! ha! ha!" he yelled demagogically, glaring upon me like a roused lion. "They swore that I could not make it! But see! see! See my new power! See my new engine! I made it, and they are jealous of me! I made it, and when it was done, they stole it from me. But I have found it! For years I have been wandering in search of my great engine, and they swore it was not made. But I have found it! I know it this morning when I saw it at Dantzic, and I was determined to have it. And I have got it. Ho! ho! ho! we on the way to the moon, I say! By the Virgin Mother, we'll be in the moon in four-and-twenty hours. Down, down, villain! If you move, I'll shoot you!" This was spoken to the poor fireman, who at that moment attended to the engine, and the frightened man sank back as if he were dead. "Here's little Oseus just before us!" cried out one of the guard. But even as he spoke the buildings were at hand, and the sickening sensation settled upon my heart. I closed my eyes; but still we thundered on! The officers had seen our speed, and knowing that we would not head up in that distance, they had changed the switch, so that we went forward.

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